

# MINUTES

## Virginia Tech University Council: Commission on Student Affairs (CSA) Minutes

November 10, 2016

The meeting was called to order by Commission chair Mr. Matt Chan at 3:32 p.m.

### In attendance

Allison Aviles Garcia, Susan Anderson, Travis Bauer, Matt Chan, Alicia Cohen, Gabe Cohen, Chelsea Corkins, Pat Finn, Aliana Harrison, Byron Hughes, Maddie Mitcham, Brett Netto, Meriam Nure, Alexa Parsley, Andrew Peck, Nevetha Ramesh, Tara Reel, Evan Robohm, Chris Saunders, Heather Wagoner for Angela Simmons, Liang Shi, Jay Hogan for Brett Speakman, Lauren Surface

### Absent with notification

Manjot Kaur

### Attending guests

Joe Edens, Luis Garay, Tracy Newton, Erin Peters, Kendell Pete, Darren Small, Tricia Smith, Jason Soileau

### Absent

Ron Mecham, James Orr, Cameron Varano

### Approval of Agenda and Past Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the agenda. The motion carried. A motion was also made to approve the minutes for the October 27, 2016 meeting of CSA. The motion was seconded and approved.

### Presentation

Mr. Jason Soileau, Assistant Vice President for Planning and University Architect, gave a presentation on the University Master Plan progress to date. Mr. Soileau expressed that it is important that the university fulfills its land-grant mission of transformation, and that it is important to identify, create, and enhance spaces for experiential learning and engagement, in line with the over-arching goal of the VT-Shaped student model. The private firm Sasaki Associates was commissioned for the Master Plan process, and among other things they identified the overall appeal and strength of Virginia Tech is the sense of community and comradery. The Master Plan process is on-going and is scheduled to be completed by December 2017. This timeframe will allow for the Master Plan process to align well with the outcomes stemming out of the Beyond Boundaries university visioning project and the Destination Areas. Staff from Sasaki have visited Virginia Tech twice, and will return in the Spring with ample opportunities to engage with students and other stakeholder groups, including with the extended campuses in Roanoke and the National Capital Region to address and incorporate their needs. Mr. Soileau presented CSA members with related discussion questions, with the following collected responses:

- Students feel strongly and favorably toward the Drillfield and Corps-related area of campus, as well as the green spaces.
- There are strong and urgent needs for equitable spaces between student organizations/communities. There are also equally urgent needs for sufficient spaces for similar groups.
- There is low usage and awareness of the Alumni Center by students.
- The locations and qualities of potential new expansion of university commons and/or student unions will be critical to the student experience.
- Outdoor art rendition (e.g., steps outside of Derring Hall) is generally appreciated by students.
- Parking remains a problem for the student experience; there are needs for more central parking locations for commuting students.
- It will be critical for the Master Plan to separately address the different needs of undergraduate and graduate students.

## **Committee Reports**

Mr. Chris Saunders gave a report from the Hokie Handbook Review Committee. The Committee has met for the first time, and student members include Mr. Gabe Cohen, Ms. Alexa Parsley, and Mr. Saunders. During their first meeting members introduced themselves and reaffirmed the mission of the Committee.

Mr. Darren Small, chair of the Student Budget Board (SBB), gave its monthly report to the Commission. Two more funding workshops were provided since the last report, with 310 student organizations now eligible to apply for funding. There will be one more workshop this semester. To date, there were a total of 212 funding requests, accounting for approximately \$200,000, which is about 43% of the SBB budget allocated for Registered Student Organizations. Mr. Small indicated this is consistent with trends from previous years. Mr. Small introduced to the Commission Ms. Eryn Peters, SBB member representing HokiePride, and together they reported that the culture and climate within SBB is good this year, with no funding request backlog, and good attendance from SBB members and amiable atmosphere between members.

## **Constituency Updates**

Ms. Alexa Parsley gave an update on Student Government Association (SGA) activities. The SGA Directors of Sustainability and Transportation partnered with the University Sustainability Office for a \$90,000 Green Proposal for a campus bike share program. The SGA Director of Academic Affairs is working on a partnership with the Recreational Sports Office as well as the SGA legislation for a smoke-free campus. The SGA Director of Equity and Diversity will be organizing an end-of-semester reflection event. In addition, the SGA will be organizing the third annual Duck Pond clean up, with the intention of this becoming a more expanded event. For reading day, SGA again will be sponsoring a study hall with free food for students.

Ms. Chelsea Corkins gave an update on Graduate Student Assembly (GSA) activities. A recent ruling from the federal government meant the health insurance subsidies provided by the university to graduate assistants (GAs, GTAs, and GRAs) are exempted from certain provisions in the Affordable Care Act, and thus can be continued to be provided. This will ensure that health insurance can continue to be affordable for all graduate students on assistantships. The GSA will be holding a town hall meeting, inviting staff from the Office of Transportation and Parking as well as the Office of Alternative Transportation for informal discussions with graduate students on the topic of campus transportation and parking. Ms. Corkins announced that the GSA is partnering with the Graduate-Undergraduate Mentorship Program (GUMP). GUMP is a graduate student organization that provides support and matches graduate students to undergraduate students who may be interested in graduate education.

Ms. Tara Reel and Mr. Gabe Cohen gave updates on the activities they are engaging in as student representatives to the Board of Visitors (BoV). The BoV met on 11/6-11/7, and discussed many important items. Highlights included: approval of non-credit courses requirement for undergraduate students (e.g., Title IX training, diversity training), update on student conduct exemption on reporting students, and approval of new graduate degrees. Mr. Cohen and Ms. Reel added that the 2017-18 student representatives to the BoV application process will begin soon. Mr. Chan also added that several important items were discussed during the informational session, including a protection mechanism the university will employ to colleges and departments against the state budget shortfall, and also that the university has initiated the process to integrate the Virginia Tech Carillion School of Medicine as the university's ninth college. The School of Medicine integration process will coincide with the process of reaffirming the university's accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

## **University Council and Commission Updates**

There was no report from the University Council as the Council has not met since the last CSA meeting.

Mr. Chan gave a report from the Commission on Equal Opportunities and Diversity (CEOD). This Commission met on 11/7, and much discussion were centered on the proposed addition of the intersectional diversity requirement to the Pathways General Education Curriculum. The proposal will likely be approved by the University Curriculum Committee on General Education before the next CEOD meeting. Then CEOD will vote on its approval at its 12/5 meeting, after which if it is concurrently approved by the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies it will move forward to the University Council for the next approval step.

There is no report from the Academic Support Committee as this committee has not met since the last CSA meeting.

## **Division of Student Affairs Update**

There was no report from the Division.

## **Unfinished Business**

Mr. Small presented proposed changes to the SBB Policy and Procedures to the Commission for second reading and approval. The proposed change will allow for newly formed student organizations to apply for SBB funds. The proposed SBB Policy and Procedures change will also align credit/debit handling to current practice at the Controller's Office. With no further questions and discussions the Commission voted unanimously for the approval of these proposed changes.

Mr. Chan announced that the Muslim Student Union has requested more time for internal review of its Constitution, and thus made a motion to table the Constitution approval until the next CSA meeting on 12/1. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

## **New Business**

Mr. Evan Robohm gave a presentation to the Commission regarding reporting methods of bias-related incidents. The Dean of Students office is responsible for the handling of such incidents. In the past, an online reporting platform was available with the option of reporting anonymously. This platform was available since 2005, and was discontinued in 2009 because of dwindling utilization and possible legal concerns with anonymous reports. Mr. Robohm expressed urgent concerns that the current available reporting methods (email, phone, and visiting relevant offices in person) are too slow and can be a high barrier to certain victims, and that a standardized online reporting form is necessary for students, especially in light of the recent political climate. Mr. Chan mentioned that he and Mr. Robohm have invited Mr. Tom Brown, the Dean of Students, to attend this CSA meeting for discussion, but Mr. Brown was unable to attend due to prior commitments. However, Mr. Brown responded in an email that his office has some related development on its website and is more than happy to receive some feedback from student leaders. Mr. Brown has committed to attend the 12/1 CSA meeting to address these concerns. At the meantime, Mr. Chan, Mr. Robohm, and Mr. Saunders will meet with Mr. Brown prior to the 12/1 CSA meeting to discuss this, with the goal of having some type of online reporting form ready for roll out by the first day of class in the upcoming spring semester. CSA members also mentioned the need for an awareness and education campaign related to bias-related incidents.

## **Announcements**

- Ms. Liang Shi announced that the Dance of Nations will take place on 11/15 at 6:30 p.m. in the Haymarket Theater.
- Ms. Nevetha Ramesh reported that a new on-going program from the Intercultural Engagement Center called the "Story Board Project" will take place in the Multicultural Center.

## **Next Meeting**

The next regularly scheduled CSA meeting will be held on December 1, 2016, in the Brush Mountain Room at Squires Student Center.

There being no further business, the motion to adjourn was made at 5:23 p.m. and was passed unanimously.

Recorder: Tracy Newton